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Newsletter of the Florida Aviation (AeroSpace) Historical Society

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P.O. Box 127, Indian Rocks Beach, Florida, 33785-0127

PAN AMERICA AIRLINES' CAPT. ED MUSICK

PIONEER PAN AMERICAN PILOT WHO PAVED THE WAY FOR WORLD AIR TRANSPORTATION MISSING IN EXPLOSION OF THE SAMOAN CLIPPER NEAR PAGO PAGO, AMERICAN SAMOAN ISLANDS.

Edwin C. Musick (August 13, 1894-January 11, 1938) was Chief Pilot for Pan American World Airways (PAA) and pioneered many of Pan Am's transoceanic routes including the famous route across the Pacific Ocean on the China Clipper.

He was born in St. Louis, MO., and learned to fly at a flying school in Los Angeles in the years leading up to WWI. In 1917 he joined the Aviation Section, U.S. Signal Corps in San Diego as a flight instructor. During the war he taught at airfields in Wichita Falls, TX and Miami, Florida. It was in Florida after the war that Musick founded his own flying school and surpassed the 10,000 flying hours mark.

In Oct. 1927, Musick joined PAA as it was just starting operations. He made the company's inaugural mail flight to Havana, Cuba from Key West, Florida that same year. Musick was promoted to chief pilot for PAA's Caribbean Division in 1930.

In 1934, Musick was chosen to make the trial flights for the new Sikorsky S-42 flying boat. During these stringent test flights, Musick collected 10 world records for seaplanes. Musick's work on these trials led to his piloting the first two trans-Pacific survey routes for PAA in 1935.

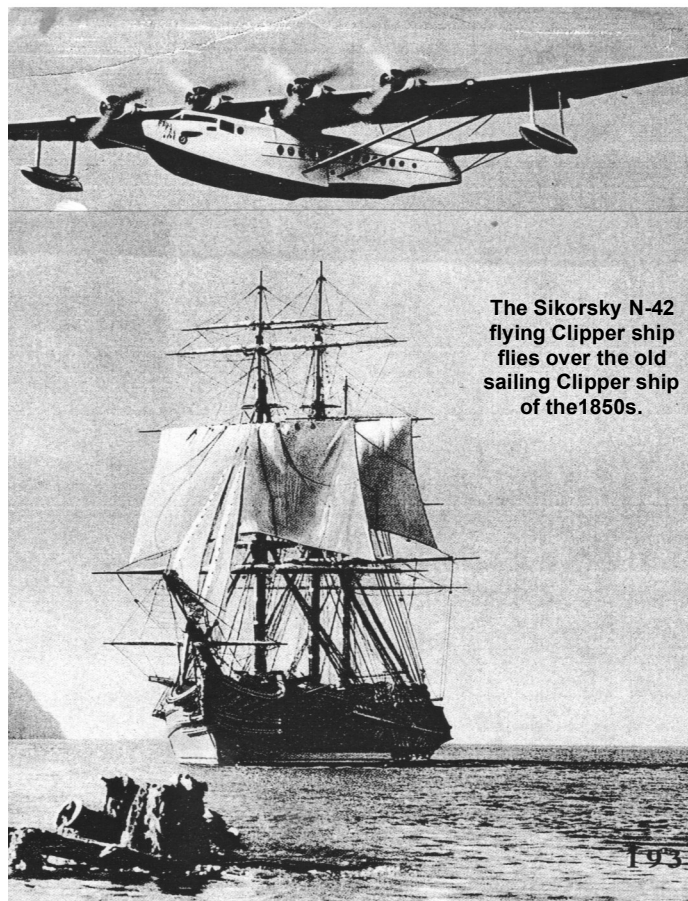
Because of his exploits with PAA, Musick was one of the best known pilots of the 1930s, even making the cover of Time Magazine on Dec. 2, 1935. Also that year, he received the Harmon Trophy ("Outstanding Airmen of the Year"). At one point during the 1930s, Musick held more flying records than any other pilot.

Musick and his crew of six died in the crash of the S-42 *Samoan Clipper* near Pago Pago, American Samoa, on a cargo and survey flight to Auckland, New Zealand. About one hour after take-off the aircraft reportedly experienced an engine oil leak and Musick turned back toward Pago Pago. After the crew reported they were dumping fuel in preparation for a precautionary landing an explosion tore the aircraft apart in flight. PAA stated at the time that the fuel dump valves underneath the wings likely vented vaporized fuel near the engines' exhaust ports, causing the explosion and loss of the flying boat. Floating wreckage from the plane was later found about 14 miles NW of Pago Pago by the U.S. naval seaplane tender *USS Avocet*. The bodies of the seven crewmen were not recovered.

Musick Point in Auckland Harbor is named after him as well as Musick Light, a lighthouse on Kanton Island, Phoenix Island, Kiribati.

DETAILS...Jan. 11, 1938, Pan American Airways' Sikorsky S-42B NC16734, *Samoan Clipper*, took off from Pago Pago enroute to Auckland, New Zealand. The plane had a crew of seven, commanded by Capt. Edwin C. Musick, the airline's senior pilot (age 44) and a cargo of mail.

About two hours out, the number four engine began leaking oil. Capt. Musick ordered the engine shut down. The flight radioed that



The Sikorsky N-42 flying Clipper ship flies over the old sailing Clipper ship of the 1850s.

LATE BREAKING NEWS

Feb. 2, 2019, St. Petersburg, FL....General Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr. and Russell St. Arnold were admitted to the Florida Aviation Hall of Fame today at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. Details on page 2.

FAHS President Mary Fletcher comments: On April 4, 2019, during Sun'n Fun, the Florida Air Museum will host a Florida Hall of Fame ceremony at 10 am. The presentation will honor the recent inductees. The event is free and is open to all. Hope to see many FAHS members at this event—April 4th at 10 am.

The **informal weekly noon Wednesday luncheon** at the Largo Family Restaurant, 788 N. Missouri Ave., Largo, FL. is becoming more popular—usually 12-15 attending. Why not join us? One of our members carries a harmonica to rev things up should the tempo slow. Our 1st Saturday 10:30 am monthly Board Meeting is also open to members, held at AWAPs located at Whitted Airport, 451 8th Ave. SE, St. Petersburg. Free snacks available.



FLORIDA AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Published every odd-numbered months.

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they were returning to Pago Pago. They never arrived. Wreckage, a large oil slick, various documents and articles of the crew's clothing were found by the Naval seaplane tender *USS Avocet* 14 miles west of the Pago Pago.. It was apparent that the S-42 had exploded in mid-air.

The cause of the explosion is not known with certainty but based on Capt. Musick's handling of a similar problem with *Samoan Clipper's* number four engine on an earlier flight, a possible cause is suggested.

On the earlier flight the engine had begun seriously overheating and Musick ordered the flight engineer to shut it down. Because of the increased power with only three engines, Capt. Musick ordered the crew to begin dumping fuel to decrease the weight of the airplane before landing.

Pan American had tested the fuel dumping characteristics of the S-42 using dye, and learned that because of the air flow patterns around the wings, the fluid tended to accumulate around the trailing edge of the wings, and that it could actually be sucked into the wings themselves.

On the previous flight as fuel was being dumped, fuel vapors were present in the cabin, which required that all electrical systems be shut off, even though it was night. Liquid gasoline was dripping into the cockpit from the wing above.

Samoan Clipper had been very heavy with fuel when it departed from the long transoceanic flight to Auckland. Presuming that Capt. Musick once again ordered fuel to be dumped prior to landing, and that the vapors collected around the wings, the fuel could have been detonated by the electrical motors which were used to lower the flaps for flight at slower speed, or by coming into contact with the hot exhaust of the engines.

Two independent investigations were carried out by PAA and by the US Navy and both came to this conclusion.

Killed along with Capt. Musick were Capt. Cecil G. Sellers, Second Officer P.S. Brunk, Navigator F. J. MacLean, Flight Engineer J. W. Stickrod, Flight Mechanic, J. A. Brooks and Radio Operator T. D. Findley.

GEN. "CHAPPIE" JAMES & RUSSELL ST. ARNOLD ADMITTED TO FLORIDA AVIATION HALL OF FAME.

General Daniel "Chappie" James (1920-1978) and the late Russell St. Arnold were entered into the Florida Aviation Hall of Fame on February 2nd at the Annual FAHS banquet held at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club.

General James was a fighter pilot who in 1975 became the first African-American to reach the rank of four-star general.

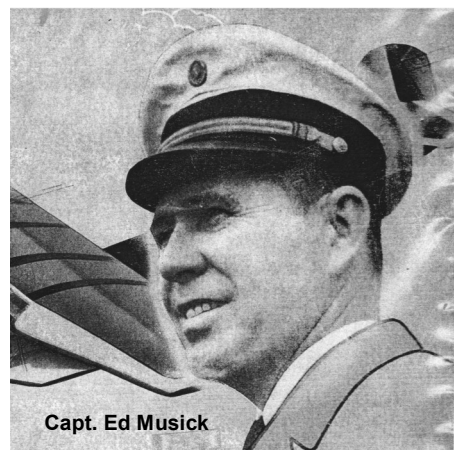
James was born in Pensacola, Florida and graduated from the Tuskegee University in 1942. He remained during WW II at Tuskegee as a civilian instructor pilot in the Army Air Corps. He did not see combat until the Korean War where he flew 101 combat missions in P-51 Mustangs and F-80 jets. James went to Thailand in Dec. 1966 as deputy commander of operations under Col. Robin Olds and flew 78 combat missions in North Vietnam.

Russell St. Arnold grew up in Duluth, Minnesota. As a young teenager he shipped out on the ore boats that traveled the Great Lakes & during WWII he participated in both the North African and Normandy invasions.

Saint became a "ramp tramp" at St. Petersburg International and soon had his fixed base *Saint Aircraft* flight school in operation. This was later moved to Clearwater Executive Airport. Saint crisscrossed the earth through the skies, on the seas and on the highways. During a motorcycle tour of Australia he ran into another cyclist in the middle of the desert coming in the opposite directions only to find that both cyclists were from Clearwater, Florida. Saint went West in 2007. (See photo on page 8.)

22 Nov. 1935

The Pan American Airway's flying boat, *China Clipper*, a Martin M-130, NC14716, departed Alameda, CA (an island in San Francisco Bay) at 3:46 p.m., Friday, and arrived at Honolulu at 10:39 a.m., Saturday, completing the first leg of a five-day transpacific flight to Manila.



Capt. Ed Musick

The aircraft commander was Capt. Edwin Charles Musick.

Pan Am personnel called the *Clipper* "Sweet Sixteen," referring to her Civil Aeronautics Board registration number, NC14716. The airplane and Humphrey Bogart starred in a 1936 movie "China Clipper."

NC14716 was the first of three Martin M-130 four-engine flying boats and was used to inaugurate the first commercial transpacific air service from San Francisco to Manila. It was operated by a flight crew of 6-9, depending on the length of the flight, plus cabin staff, and could carry 18 passengers on overnight flights or a maximum 36 passengers. Maximum speed of the flying boat was 180 mph, Service ceiling was 10,000 feet and the range was 3,200 miles

FLORIDA'S AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Located at the Florida Air Museum at Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, FL.

Douglas Baker, test pilot (2003); George "Ted" Baker, founder of National Airlines (2004); Thomas W. Benoist, pioneer aircraft builder (2011); Jacqueline Cochran, pioneer aviatrix (2003); Leroy Brown, native pioneer Floridian, crop-duster, airline pilot and leader in the U.S. Airline Industry Museum project (2009); Dr. Warren J. Brown, flight surgeon & aviation journalist (2017); Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr. Fighter Pilot; (2019); Glenn Curtiss, pioneer pilot, inventor and founder of three Florida cities (2006); Jimmy Doolittle, pioneer pilot and war hero (2007); Amelia Earhart, Pioneer aviatrix lost on round-the-world flight in 1937 (2010); Percival Fansler, founder of the World's First Airline (2003); Chalmers H. Goodlin, fighter pilot WW 2 and test pilot (2005); George Haldeman, test pilot and holder of numerous records (2006); Ed Hoffman Sr. (2008), pioneer pilot; Howard Hughes, pioneer pilot and movie producer (2007); Jack Hunt, Navy blimp record holder & founding president Embry-Riddle University (2011); Antony H. Jannus, pilot of the 1st Airline (2003); Colin Kelly, 1st WW II hero (2011); Joseph W. Kittinger, Jr., balloonist and test pilot (2003); William Krusen, pioneer Florida airman (2011); Col. & Mrs. Charles A. Lindbergh, pioneer pilots (2004); Lewis Maytag, CEO of National Airlines (2007); David McCampbell, USN pilot, Medal of Honor winner with 34 victories over the Japanese (2010); A.B. McMullen, builder of many of Florida's airports (2004); Zack Mosley creator of "Smilin' Jack;" (2008); Charles E. Rickenbacker, Navy test pilot (2006); Edward Vernon Rickenbacker, CEO of Eastern Air Lines (2003); John Paul Riddle, founder of Embry-Riddle University (2005); Lawrence Sperry, inventor of the auto-pilot, turn & bank indicator and artificial horizon (2011); Russell St. Arnold Pioneer Pilot (2019); Nicole Stott, Astronaut (2011); Paul W. Tibbets, Jr., pilot of the B-29 which dropped the Hiroshima atomic bomb (2005); Juan Terry Trippe, founder of Pan American World Airways (2003); Phil Waldman, ferry pilot (2016); Kermit Weeks, Curator of "Fantasy of Flight" air museum (2008); Robert M. White, fighter pilot WW 2 and test pilot (2006).

JUST 90 MILES OFF THE FLORIDA COAST+

The U-2 Story

Excerpts from the late FAHS' Marion "Hack", U-2 Pilot's story & the fine article by Edward Kosner, which appeared in the July 14, 2018 edition of the WSJ.

At the height of the Cold War, three Americans desperate to protect their country from nuclear annihilation by the Soviet Union perfected an airplane in seamless secrecy, a spy plane with long, slender wings that could fly higher than any other. To obscure its sensational capabilities, they gave it a plain vanilla name—the U-2. The men—and their notorious ace pilot—are gone, but six decades later the U-2 flies on.

It's the pilot who first comes to mind when the U-2 is mentioned. His name was Lt. Frank Powers, but after he was shot down in 1960 over the Soviet Union, captured alive and put on show trial, he became known forever by his full name, Francis Gary Powers, reviled as a traitor by some and embraced by others as a martyred stooge of great power conflict. The blustery Nikita Khrushchev seized on the incident to scuttle a summit meeting with President Dwight Eisenhower and turn the Cold War even colder. Two years later, another U-2 flew over Cuba and revealed that Khrushchev had secreted nuclear missiles 90 miles from the Florida mainland touching off the crises that proved to be President Kennedy's finest hour.

Other heroes are Edwin Land, the scientific wizard who invented the Polaroid instant camera, Clarence "Kelly" Johnson, the Lockheed aeronautical engineer who developed the P-38 Lightning fighter, the P-80 Shooting Star jet fighter and the Super Constellation airliner, and Richard Bissell, a tweedy CIA spook whose career ended in ignominy as the architect of the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

Land's company was the Apple of its day, a revered technological wonderworks. He had a second, shadow career as a technology whisperer to American defense officials. In the mid-1950s, Land had a brainstorm! America needed a revolutionary intelligence technology to monitor the Soviet's development of intercontinental nuclear missiles, heavy bombers and atomic submarines capable of devastating the U.S. in a surprise attack or nuclear exchange. Conventional spying—couldn't do the job.

The story started with the establishment of a skunk-works facility at a dry salt lake in Nevada called Area 51 (yes, that Area 51, later the supposed hub of hush-hush UFO research by the Air Force.) Land got Eisenhower and Allen Dulles, the head of the CIA, enthusiastic about the project, and secret funding was secured. Kelly Johnson conceived the design of a lightweight aircraft that could stay airborne for 10 hours+ at 70,000 feet, being thus immune to ground-based missiles and Russian jets. Bissell oversaw the project, and Ike kept the U-2 with the CIA, when Gen. Curtis LeMay, the bombastic chief of the Strategic Air Command, tried to snatch it away.

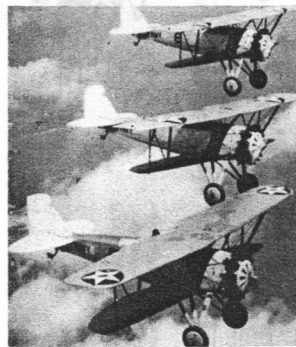
While all this was going on, Land's technicians produced high-resolution cameras that could function in the freezing skies 13 miles above the earth. CIA specialists recruited and trained a cadre of test pilots, created pressure flying suits for them and instructed them in celestial navigation and the use of a poison "L pill" if needed. Top of the class was Powers, who was sworn to secrecy and transferred from the Air Force to the CIA. His cover story was that he was the civilian pilot testing a new Lockheed high altitude weather research plane.

Finally, in July 1956, Powers and the other pilots began to fly over the Soviet Union. They brought back 30,000 feet of film that was scrutinized by a flabbergasted band of photo-interpreters who delivered enlargements to CIA headquarters.

Bissell and Dulles stood in front of a long table, marveling at the clarity of the prints. They were able to count the cars in the streets of Leningrad without a magnifying glass! The pictures soon went to the White House.

However enthusiastic Ike may have been, he was always concerned that a U-2 might be downed over Russia or that a pilot might be captured alive, triggering an international incident. Which is just what happened at the worst possible moment: Soviet missiles downed Powers's U-2 over Sverdlovsk, in central Russia, on May Day 1960, just two weeks before Eisenhower and Khrushchev were to meet at a summit in Paris. Unaware that the Russians had the pilot and the fuselage of the spy plane, the Americans lied repeatedly about the mission—only to have Powers

THE HIGH HATS — Forerunners of the Blue Angels as a flight demonstration team were the High Hats who thrilled the nation during the Roaring



Twenties' as they launched a legend for flight precision which still persists. At the 1929 Cleveland Air Races, awed fans watched the trio of Navy Boeing F2B's as they took off, looped, landed and taxiied, while tied together by short lengths of manila line. The team consisted of Lieutenant L. E. Gehres, Lieutenant (JG) F. N. Kivette, and Lieutenant (JG) F. O'Beirne. Charles Lindbergh also performed with them at one time. The pictures shown here were taken at a demonstration here in Pensacola.

paraded before the world and later put on trial after hundreds of hours of interrogation, during which he shared many but not all secrets. Soon after the Paris summit began Khrushchev demanded an apology from a humiliated Ike and essentially stormed out. A future summit in Russia was canceled outright, and U.S. Soviet relations plunged to a new low.

Ultimately, the frost thawed in 1962. Powers was swapped for Soviet spy Rudolf Abel (who unlike Powers never blabbed to his captors.). Beyond that, the vast U-2 photo file enabled American defense officials to disarm claims by hawks that the Russians had achieved a dangerous "missile gap" or "bomber gap" that put America at risk.

Indeed, it was irrefutable photographic evidence from the perilous spy-plane flights over Cuba that enabled JFK to identify the threat, monitor the assembly of the rockets, confront the Russians at the United Nations and finally get exchange for American scrapping missiles in Turkey aimed at the USSR. This documents the skill of the U-2 pilots, one of whom was shot down by an isolated Russian air-defense crew in Cuba certain that nuclear war had already broken out. The pilot, Rudy Anderson, was killed in midair by missile shrapnel, but the lightweight fuselage made it to the ground 'barely crumpled,' after spinning down slowly like a leaf falling from a tree.

This occurrence reminds us of how resilient, inspired and successful American military, industrial and political leadership could be in the darkest days of the Cold War and show how today's jangly crises pale compared with those the country survived in the 1950s and '60s.

Two new books are now available on this subject: **BROTHERHOOD OF SPIES**, by Monte Reel, Doubleday, 342 pages, \$28.95 and **ABOVE AND BEYOND** by Casey Sherman & Michael Tougas, Public Affairs, 328 pages, \$28, from Amazon.com.



The Valiant Air Command, 6600Tico Rd., Titusville, FL, announces it will be hosting one of the rarest flying warbirds in the world for our 2019 Space Coast Warbird Airshow to be held March 15, 16, and 17th.

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Bill Dyer Jr., would like to purchase Book 3 of "CLOUD COUNTRY" by Jimmie Mattern. It was written about 1936. Bill Dyer, Jr., 1607 Cambridge Dr., Kinston, NC 28504.

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FORT WAYNE AVIATION, Baer Field & Beyond, by FAHS' Roger Myers, 130 photos. Price \$24 includes P & H. Phone: 260 747 4775; E-mail ROGER-FORTWAYNE@AOL.COM. Roger is a former WW II bombardier.

"BEFORE THEY WERE THE BLACK SHEEP" By Carl Dunbar, Univ. Press of Florida, ISBN 978-0-8130-3725-7, 305 pgs., hardback, \$32., "A must read for young Navy officers as they enter aviation training."

"TONY, AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE," By FAHS member Patrick Lemmon. The story of Tony Jannus as it should have happened. The book uses historical data and puts them into a story-book form. Should be able to pick up at Amazon.com: ISBN 978 0 9814956 0 6, or by writing "Fiction Publishing, 5626 Travelers Way, Ft. Pierce, FL. 34982 or email: fictionub@bellsouth.net.

"COME UP AND GET ME," FAHS' own Col. Joe Kittinger's new book, available from Amazon.com for about \$25. For details: hislits@earthlink.net.

ANGEL ON MY WING by FAHS's Lt.Col. Richard B. Lewis—memoirs of missions during 8th AF, 493rd BG., 862nd BS during WWII (35 missions). Newly re-published—6 x 9, 122 pages, color, personally signed, \$14.95 + shipping. Email: aomwing@aol.com, www.angelonmywing.com, check to 9211 Spyglass Court, Jacksonville, FL. 32256, Also Ebay.

JACKIE COCHRAN, soft cover now available, \$24.95 by Doris Rich. 288 pages, ISBN 978-0-8130-3506-2. Jackie is a member of the Florida. Aviation Hall of Fame. Orders 800 226 3822 or www.UPF.com

"Hagler Field, A History of Pensacola's Airport," A new book by FAHS' Leo F. Murphy. Full color soft book chronicles the history of military & civilian landplane operations in Pensacola.. Available at \$29.95 (no shipping charge to FAHS members) or by writing Leo at P. O. Box 7176, Daytona Beach, FL. 32116; email: leomurphy18@gmail.com or phone 850 341 6400..

HEDGEHOPPING AVIATION, A Book For Pilots By a Pilot...by FAHS' Clyde E. Roach, ISBN: 978-1-4389-6137-8, also "Confessions of an Airline Pilot" 37 years with Eastern Airlines....contact: ceroach1921@gmail.com

"THE GOLDEN AGE OF FLYING", Frontier Air Lines 1946-1986, by Capt. Tex Searle. E-mail: texsearle@msn.com, available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon. and former PAA Captain David McLay, P.O. Box 7170 Safety Harbor, FL., 34695..

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"SEA DART," by FAHS member B.J. Long, the story of the experimental supersonic seaplane interceptor. 73 pages soft cover. ISBN 0-942612-23-X. Details: Steve Ginter, 1754 Warfield Cir., Simi Valley, CA 93063.

"MY LIFE IN THE SKY," by FAHS' Capt. Ed. Mitchell. His story of flying in the first B-29 raid over Japan since the Doolittle raid, through his experiences flying for Seaboard World Airlines. To order, send check for \$18.00 (postage included) to Ed Mitchell, 742 Arbordale Court, Englewood, FL., 34223.

"FLORIDA'S AVIATION HISTORY," 2nd edition. 350 pages, includes databank chronology, by FAHS News Editor, Warren Brown. \$15, to P.O. Box 127, Indian Rocks, FL., 33785.

"IT'S BEST TO BE LUCKY," the combat experiences of FAHS member Curtis C. Truver in Korea flying F-80s and F-86s and in Vietnam flying the F4Cs. Send \$10.50 to the author at 4152 Prima Vista Circle, Jacksonville, FL, 32217.

"GEORGE PREDDY, TOP MUSTANG ACE," is sold out in both hard & soft cover editions. However, it has been placed on Kindle and Nook. Also placed there is the first book on Preddy: *Wings God Gave My Soul*. They are priced at \$4.99 each. The DVD *Preddy The Mustang Ace* is still available at \$19.95. Call Joe Noah, 434 374 2781 or write Joe at noahjoew@gmail.com.

FORD In The Service of America, ISBN 978-0-7864-4485-4, soft cover, 70 photos. \$40, including postage & taxes. Relates the entire story of Ford's contribution to winning both WW I and WW II. Tim O'Callaghan, P.O. Box 512, Northville, MI 48167. Web page: www.fordatwar.com

THE BLIMP GOES TO WAR, 90 minute VHS video documentary produced by FAHS member, Richard G. Van Treuren. \$35, to Atlantis Productions, P.O. Box 700, Edgewater, FL. 32132.

"AMERICAN AIRSHIP BASES AND FACILITIES," a book by James R. Shock. Write: Atlantis Productions, P.O. Box 700, Edgewater, FL. 32132, \$35.

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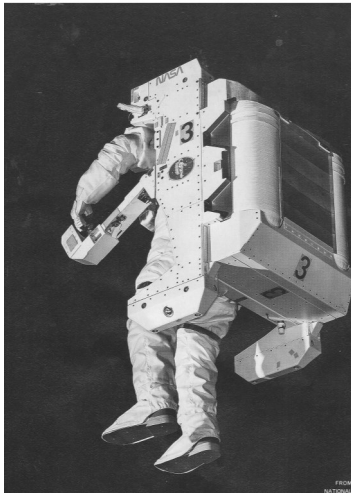
VALIENT AIR COMMAND. Preserving history for the future . Membership available, donations welcome. Warbird Museum open, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Contact Lloyd Morris, 407 268 1941 or write 6600 Tico Rd., Titusville, FL., 32780.

THE FLORIDA AIR MUSEUM AT SUN'N FUN is looking for members and volunteers to help maintain Florida's official "Air Museum." To become a member, send \$35 to P.O. Box 7670, Lakeland, FL. 33807-7670; phone 863 648 9264. The Museum is located on Lakeland's Airport. This is the cousin-organization of the FAHS, since we both have a joint-relationship with the Florida Aviation Hall of Fame and Florida aviation archives, both located in the Museum.

"AVIATION IN FLORIDA," by FAHS member Keven M. McCarthy. 174 pages, hardback, \$18.95 plus postage. ISBN 1-56164-281-9. Write Pineapple Press, P.O. Box 3889, Sarasota, FL., 34230.

"FLYING MACHINES OVER PENSACOLA," by FAHS' retired USN CDR, Dr. Details the early history of Naval Aviation in Pensacola to 1929. ISBN 0-9743487-0-8. Price \$19.95 + free shipping.. Priority mail, \$4. Write, P.O. Box 7176, Daytona Beach, FL. 32116; Phone: 850 341 6400; email: leomurphy18@gmail.com

Like WW I flying? Try FAHS Editor's *Child Yank Over the Rainbow, 1918*, the true story of American pilot Col. Joe Boudwin, 5 victories, flying over the US 42nd Rainbow Division in 1918. Price: \$15, postage included, P.O. Box 127, Indian Rocks Beach, FL., 33785.



NEIL ARMSTRONG ON THE MOON

"WHO WAS MR GORSKY?"

In case you didn't already know this little tidbit.....

On July 20th, 1969, as Commander of the Apollo 11 Lunar Module, Neil Armstrong was the first person to set foot on the Moon.

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," were televised to Earth and heard by millions. BUT, just before he re-entered the lander, he made the enigmatic remark. "Good luck, Mr. Gorsky." Asked the meaning Armstrong always just smiled.

On July 5, 1995, in Tampa, while answering questions following a speech, a reporter brought up the 26 year-old question about Mr. Gorsky. Many at NASA thought it was a casual remark concerning some rival Soviet Cosmonaut. However, upon checking, there was no Gorsky in either the Russian or American space programs.

Over the years, many questioned Armstrong as to what the "good luck, Mr. Gorsky" was and this time he finally responded because his Mr. Gorsky had just died, so Neil Armstrong felt he could now answer the question. Here is the answer to "Who was Mr. Gorsky?"

In 1938, when he was a kid in a small mid-Western town, he was playing baseball with a friend in the backyard. His friend hit the ball, which landed in his neighbor's yard by their bedroom window. His neighbors were Mr. and Mrs. Gorsky. As he leaned down to pick up the ball, young Armstrong heard Mrs. Gorsky shouting at Mr. Gorsky: "SEX! You want sex?! You'll get sex when the kid next door walks on the Moon!"

Neil Armstrong's family confirmed that this was a true story.

KEY WEST IN WORLD WAR II

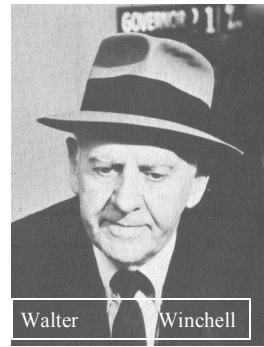
Key West Naval Station originated in 1823 as a base from which American naval forces could suppress pirates in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico.

The scene of much naval activity during several wars, this facility served only as a radio station in the late thirties. The Navy reactivated Naval Base Key West at Trumbo Point in Nov. 1939 and located a submarine base and PBV squadron there. By Dec. 1940, Trumbo Point received designation as NAS Key West. Using four destroyers and three submarines, the Navy operated one of three sonar sound schools at this station. OS2-U Kingfishers and PBM Mariners operated there. With the German U-boat threat to Atlantic shipping, Key West became an assembly point for convoys & a training site for anti-submarine warfare.

Meacham Field, became an Army Airfield immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Antisubmarine aircraft and P-40 Warhawk fighters were stationed there. With the departure of the Army, Meacham became an outlying field for NAS Key West and a base of a blimp utility squadron. To replace Meacham Field as Key West's Municipal Airport, the Civilian Aircraft Authority developed a new field on Boca Chica Key. Because of wartime demands for airfields, Boca Chica became an Army anti-submarine airfield. Released to the Navy in 1943 the base began training carrier, torpedo bombers, and night fighter pilots.

In 1944 Marine squadrons trained on SBDs and PBJs. During the war as many as 15,000 service personnel and dependents made Key West their home.

In March 1945, the naval facilities on Key West were consolidated as NAS Key West. Following the Allied victory in 1945, Meacham Field returned to civilian control and became Key West Municipal Airport. The Navy retained use of NAS Key West as part of Key West Command Center.



Walter Winchell

Tantalizing News

Originated by Gossip's Founding Father,
Columnist Walter Winchell

EDITOR'S NOTE: Walter Winchell

began broadcasting in 1933 to an audience of 25 million people. The Winchell style was unmistakable. He talked rapidly at 197 words per minute...the voice was high-pitched and not pleasant to the ear, but it was distinctive. The staccato quality made every item compelling. He claimed he talked so fast because if he talked more slowly people would find out what he was saying...he began his radio program with a series of dots and dashes operating the key himself. Telegraphers throughout the country complained that what Winchell tapped out made no sense. He realized he hadn't the faintest knowledge of Morse code but he refused to have an experienced telegrapher provide the sound effects for him. He wrote like a man honking in a traffic jam.

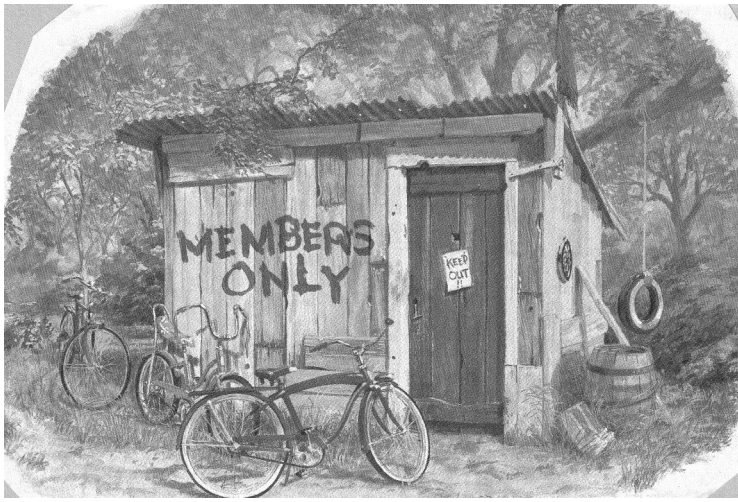
Addiction is more common than people realize....over 22 million people in the U.S. over 12 have an addiction. Here are the top 5: **No. 1: Heroin...**the most dangerous because the dose that can kill is only 5X greater than the dose for getting high. **No. 2: Cocaine...**estimated 14-20 million use this drug. **No. 3: Nicotine...**More than 2/3rds of Americans who tried smoking reported becoming dependent. **No. 4: Barbiturates** (also called "downers.") At low doses they cause euphoria but at higher levels they can suppress breathing and cause death. **No. 5: Alcohol** . 3 million died in 2012 due to this potential killer.

Spaceflight might increase cancer risk in astronauts...A research team at the University of Arizona has now found that long-term spaceflights influence natural killer cells—white blood cells that kill cancerous cells in the body, and prevent older viruses from reactivating. Cancer is a big risk to astronauts during prolonged missions because of the exposure to radiation. (Continued of Page 6.)

THE LITTLE WHITE HOUSE

Harry S. Truman became president upon the death of President Roosevelt in April 1945. As the United States' 33rd President, Truman presided over the surrender of Germany and Japan, to end World War II. The so-called, "Little White House" was constructed in 1890 as a two-family home for the U.S. Navy base commandant and paymaster. President Truman remodeled the property in 1948 for use as his vacation home, and he visited the "Little White House" 175 times between 1946 and 1952, often bringing government officials as guests. Florida's only Presidential Museum, furnished as if it was during President Truman's visits is presently open to the public.





Kudos from:

Janet Plapp, Jacksonville, FL writes: My dad, Walter Pendergrass, was a WW II pilot (P-51s). He and my mom enjoyed the Happy Landings newsletter for many years. Dad passed away on Christmas day 2007, but mom continued enjoyed your newsletter for another 11 years. She passed away a few weeks ago at the wonderful age of 94. I came across one of her newsletters recently and wanted to let you know how much they were enjoyed. Thanks so much for the joy Happy Landings brought to my folks! Janet Plapp.

From **Dr. Leo Murphy, Port Orange, FL**. "My latest book *"Lost in Heaven"* is about Pensacola-born Tuskegee Airman 1st Lt. James R. Polkinghorne, Jr. Who flew into the *Twilight Zone* while on a combat mission in Italy during WW II. He is virtually unknown, even in his hometown, and is rarely mentioned in any books. There was not a lot of information available, so it took me several years of research to piece together his story. I also knew very little about the Tuskegee Airmen or early black aviation history so my book also includes a brief history for readers likewise unfamiliar with the topic. Members can order the book on-line at www.bluewaterpress.com/heaven.

Neil Cosentino, Tampa asks, "We have 20,000 airports in the USA, the great majority of these do not have controlled towers. Q. Who controls air traffic and ground operations at airports without a control tower or an airport with a closed tower?" The answer is "Pilots using unicom frequency and good judgement." Then why doesn't the FAA change the terminology from "Non-Towered airports to Pilot Control Airports?"

Neil also informs all active pilots of an extremely informative 2-hour seminar at IT Aviation—Melbourne International Airport, 801 Harry Goode Way, Melbourne, FL 32901 which will review all ADS-B requirements to have an ADS-B system that meets the performance requirements of 91.227 (no date given). The FAA has repeatedly stated there will be no waivers or program implementation delays. With less than one year until the mandate goes into effect, now is the time to learn how ADS-B will affect you, and to finalize your installation plans. Contact Richard Funcheon for details at 772 713 1526 or Neil at 813 784 4669 for dates.

From **Isabel Yonge, Ocala, FL**...You may remove my name from your publication list, as now, I married one of your subscribers, Laurie W. Yonge, Jr. We have known each other for 79 years. Before WW II, my dad, Earl Marx, instructed for L.W. Yonge, Sr. at JAX airports. We both were seven years old. Families continued to be in each other one's lives through the years. I certainly enjoy your histories of Florida aviation, and others

CANDY FOR A WORDSMITH

A bicycle can't stand alone because it is two-tired.

What's the definition of a will? A. It's a dead giveaway!

A backward poet writes inverse.

In democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism, it's your count that votes.

When a clock is hungry, it goes back four seconds.

A lot of money is tainted. "Taint ours" and "taint mine".

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat!

When you've seen one shopping center, you've seen a mall.

Acupuncture is a jab well done.

Those who jump off a Paris bridge are in Seine. (Tnx to Dr. Lou Powell.)

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LOST MEMBERS.

Pending

UNABLE TO DELIVER

Pending

NEW ADDRESS

Pending

GONE WEST

zero

GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

Fred Mulholland, Tampa, FL.

BENEFACTOR SOCIETY MEMBERS FOR 2018 (donations of \$100+)

Fred Mulholland, Tampa, FL.

NOTICE: We have had a change at the Treasurer's post. If you paid your dues and are not listed above please drop us a line at:

FAHS, AWAPS, Albert Whitted Airport, 451 8th Ave., SE,
St. Petersburg, FL. 33701

A BOMBER PILOTS SONG IN WORLD WAR II: How True....Oh, Hedy Lamar is a beautiful gal, and Madeleine Carroll is too, But you'll find if you query, a different theory amongst any bomber crew. For the loveliest thing of which one could sing (this side of the pearly gates) Is no blonde or brunette of the Hollywood set—but an escort of P-38s.

NEWSENSE...Tantalizing News

Continued from Page 5)

"They Shall Not Grow Old," a new old movie...take a 100+year enhanced movie, give it a "3-D, color, R-rating" and see what happens? Past heroes come back to life from the terror of World War I and begin to set records of attendance. The reaction: A series of one night 'event screenings' that broke box-office records and helped the film gross more than \$11 million. Look for it—a winner!

What happens when women have the same name and birthday in one city? Chaos! That is why your hospital is now using other things, such as your hand-print, your palm-veins, or your iris (eye) for identification. For example, Harris County, Texas, home of Houston, has 528 Martha Garcias which have the first name, last name and samedate of birth!

Hearing better, think better? Could wearing a hearing aid help stave off cognitive decline? Experts say impaired hearing may increase the cognitive load on the brain, with more energy spent on processing sound and less on thinking and memory. Hearing loss may also exacerbate cognitive decline because it can lead to social isolation and depression. It makes interactions more fatiguing and can lead to breakdowns in communication with caregivers confusion and anxiety.

Aerobic exercise vs. aging...German scientists recruited 125 middle-aged people who were healthy but didn't exercise and assigned them work-out routines for the next six months. By the end of the study, those who had been asked to jog or walk briskly for 45 minutes three times a week, or to do a high-intensity interval program, had developed longer telomeres in their white blood cells. Telomeres are tiny caps on the ends of chromosomes that protect DNA from damage.

These caps shrink as humans get older, eventually resulting in cell death and disease. But aerobic exercise appeared to lengthen the participant's telomeres, dialing back the aging process. There was no lengthening in the telomeres of participants who took up weight training.

(Inhale the future...exhale the past.)

THE JOCK (airborne) & KIWI (ground-locked) SHORT-SNORTER PAGE.

Discovered unread reader, required to buy one round of drinks for fellow members...JOCK jokes inverted.

"Lexophile" describes those that have a love for words, such as "You can tune a piano, but you can't tuna fish, or "To write with a broken pencil is pointless." This year's winning submissions are posted below: *I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down!* I didn't like my beard at first, then it grew on me. *Did you hear about the crossed-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?* With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress. *Did you hear about the fellow whose entire left side was cut off?* He's all right now. The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine last week is now fully recovered. *When she saw her first strands of gray hair she thought she'd dye.* When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble. *I know a guy who's addicted to drinking brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.* When the smog lifts in Los Angeles, U.C.L.A. (Tip of the hat to Bruce Small KM2L.)

It took them three days to clean the Senior Citizens' Center, and Larry was never invited again.
and burst apart on impact! "POOP!" cried Larry!
deny, the chain broke! The beautiful watch fell to the stage
of the gently swaying watch. They were hypnotized. Then sud-
surface. A hundred and fifty pairs of eyes followed the movement
The lights were twinkling as they were reflected from its gleaming
audience became mesmerized as the watch swayed back and forth.
watch—the watch—watch the watch." The
watch gently back and forth while quietly chanting "watch the
my family for six generations," said Larry. He began to swing the
all to see. "It is a very special and valuable watch that has been in
keep your eyes on this watch," he said, holding the watch high for
beautiful antique gold pocket watch and chain. "I want you to
lence as Larry carefully withdrew from his waistcoat pocket a
all at the same time," he said. The excited chatter dropped to si-
the whole audience into a trance. "Each and everyone of you and
"Larry the Hypnotist," Larry explained that he was going to put
led by Frank at the piano, it was time for the star of the show —
tainment night at the senior citizens' center. After the sing along
It was enter-

HOSPITAL CHART BLOOPERS...The patient refused autopsy and there is no prior history of suicides. *She has no rigors or shaking chills, but her husband says she was very hot in bed last night.* While in the E.R. she was examined, x-rated and sent home. *Rectal exam revealed a normal-sized thyroid.* I saw your patient today, who is still under our care for physical therapy. *Examination of genitalia reveals that he is circus-sized.* Lab test indicated abnormal lover function.

Who says building border a wall won't work? The Chinese built one over 2,000 years ago and they still don't have any Mexicans

A voice from the closet answered, "Havana."
in the ashtray and he yelled, *Where did this cigar come from?*
ous, and he became suspicious. Then he saw a lighted cigar
Mike Montez returned unexpectedly. His wife was nerv-

Sally was driving home in Northern Arizona when she saw an elderly Navajo woman walking in the hot sun. Sally offered her a ride and she accepted. The old woman sat silently, looking at everything and noticed a brown bag. "What in bag?" asked the old woman. "It's a bottle of wine, I got it for my husband. The Navajo was silent, then speaking with quiet wisdom she said, "Good trade...."

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(Qualifications for membership: Having set foot in Thule.)

Hi Price, Bradenton, FL. C.P. 931st Sqd. L-20, C-47, C-54 (1964-65)*
Warren Brown, Largo, FL. (Operation BlueJay, 1951).
Walt Houghton, Melbourne, Florida (1960).
Charley Liller, Riverview, FL. (1957).
Bess (Balchen) Urbahn, Maine (1952).
Cdr. Leo Murphy, Gulf Breeze, F. (1981 ?)
Bob Gates, Ft. Walton, FL. (1956)
Bob Koch, Bellaire, FL., (1951-52), VP-23 Navy*
Borchik, Jr. Albert S., Shalimar, FL., (1953-54), Thule, Ice Island.*
Bornhoeft, Jack H., Mt. Prospect, IL (1945-1951)

A truck driver was driving & noticed a sign that read: "LOW BRIDGE AHEAD." Before he realizes his truck is wedged under it and cars begin honking! Finally a police car pulls up. "Got stuck huh?" The trucker replies "No Sir, I was delivering this bridge and I ran out of gas."

REMEMBER THIS GUY?

(Excerpts from Max Lucado's book, "In the Eye of the Storm, Pages 221,225-226)

This is a true story that happened almost every Friday evening in Florida when the sun dipped down into the Atlantic.

Old "Eddie" came strolling along the beach to his favorite pier. Clutched in his hand was a bucket of shrimp. He walked to the end of the pier and waited.

Before long a thousand white dots came screeching and squawking, winging their way towards his lanky frame.

Soon dozens of seagulls enveloped him. He stood there throwing shrimp to the hungry birds muttering with a smile, "Thank you, thank you".... He finally turned and walked back to the beach.

His name was Eddie Rickenbacker, famous hero of both World Wars.

On one of his WW II missions across the Pacific, he and his 7-man flight-crew had engine failure and pancaked into the Pacific. Miraculously all survived and took to life rafts.

They floated for almost a month fighting the hot sun, the sharks and hunger and thirst.

Back in the States headlines carried the story of the missing airmen, while millions prayed for their survival.

Time dragged on. All the men could hear was the slap of the waves against their frail rafts...suddenly Eddie felt something land on the top of his cap—it was a seagull.

Rickenbacker with a flash of his hand and a squawk from the gull, managed to grab the gull...food! Using the bird's intestines for bait they were able to catch fish and even more bait...with this they were able to survive for 24 horrifying days...floating in the endless Pacific before being spotted by a search plane.

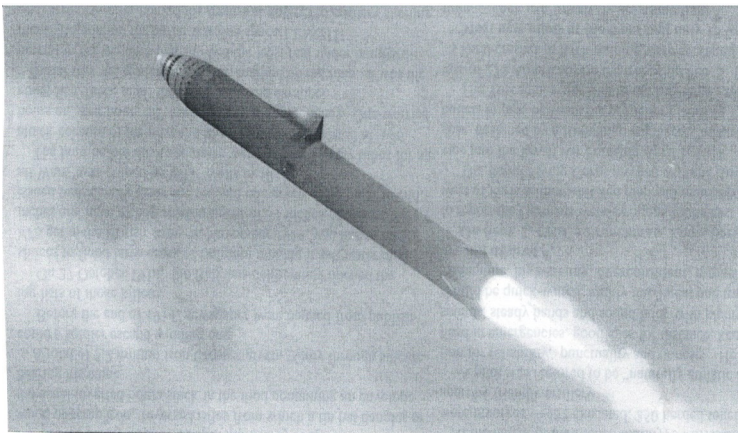
Eddie never forgot the sacrifice of that first life-saving seagull...and never stopped saying "thank you," to their surviving savior birds.

Eddie, in peacetime, went on to manage Eastern Airlines....next time you see an old guy throwing nourishment to the birds, remember this American wonder-man, who sacrificed so much to enable us all to live in freedom.



David St. Arnold, his wife and daughter accepting framed photos of his late father Russell St. Arnold, at the FAHS Hall of Fame luncheon, February 2 at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. Russell & General Chappie James were the 2019 inductees. On April 4th at 10 am, a ceremony will be held at the Florida Air Museum at Sun'n Fun, Lakeland, when formal pictures of the two will be put into place. (photo courtesy of Neil Cosentino.)

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SPACE UPDATE...

The Chinese moon landing on the far—or "dark"—side of the moon by the Chang'e-4 probe was the first in human history. It was made in Von Karman crater, within the massive Aitken Basin. The crater is named for Theodore Von Karman, a Hungarian-American founder of the U.S. Jet Propulsion Lab—and who was the doctoral advisor to the founder of the Chinese Space Agency. The Chang'e-4 probe also features four international payloads from German, Swedish, Dutch and Saudi Arabian scientists.

The Chang'e-4 probe is aimed at exploring Van Karman and the Aitken Basin, which was so blasted apart by a meteor in the ancient past that it may have left exposed the moon's mantle—and thus some of its heretofore unknown interior.

The Chinese had to send a relay satellite launched in May so the rover mired on the far side of the moon—always facing away from Earth—could send back data to scientists on our planet.

Since the Soviet Union last landed on the Moon in 1976 it's only been two Chinese landings—one in 2013, and this latest touchdown. NASA intends to expand human presence in the solar system, beginning with the Moon. They will use new deep space exploration transpiration systems, the Space Launch System and the Orion spacecraft to explore the vicinity of the Moon, challenging our current capabilities in human space-flight.

Both NASA and the Russian Space Agency Roscosmos are coming together to achieve the long-term goal of exploring deep space, and potentially sending astronauts to Mars.

The two space agencies released a joint statement on Sept. 27 signifying a common vision for human space exploration, only a few months after NASA announced plans to explore deeper parts of the solar system.



Notice the clarity of this photo....WW I? NOPE, British soldiers during WW I (see page 6, 2nd column under "Tantalizing News."). This clip is from the "new" outstanding "They Shall Not Grow Old" a revitalized 3-D color rendition of the terror of the trenches during 1914-1918. It may be coming to your theater—look for it and let us know what you think.

B-25 BOMBER HITS THE EMPIRE STATE BLDG.

9

Everyone has his claim to fame. The late Dr. Fred Tucker, surgeon from Clearwater, used to relate how his ex-roommate at West Point "Big Lips" Smith was the fellow who tried to knock down the Empire State Building back in 1945. Note the similarity to the 911 crash...

Saturday morning, July 28, 1945, a blanket of fog shrouded the eastern seaboard. At 8 am at Bedford Army Base in Bedford, Mass., a North American B-25 Mitchell dubbed *Old John Feather Merchant* striped of its olive drab paint revved for take-off.

It's pilot was **Col. William Franklin Smith, Jr.**, a B17 pilot who had returned from England a month earlier after completing 50 missions over France and Germany. After 18 months in the war zone he had won the DFC with four Oak Leaves, an Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, a Presidential Citation and the Croix de Guerre with Palm.

With the war over in Europe, Col. Smith was scheduled to return the B-25 to Sioux Falls Army Base, SD and then be re-deployed to the Pacific war. His first stop after leaving Bedford would be Newark, NJ to pick up his commanding officer. Aboard with him was Sgt. Christopher Domitrovich, the plane's crew chief.

Smith had requested an IFR flight plan to Newark with the 0830 departure. Boston ATC denied the request, owing to heavy traffic and deteriorating weather. Smith then asked for weather at LaGuardia, knowing the field lay only 15 miles to the NE of Newark. LaGuardia reported a 1500 ft. ceiling with local fog and light rain. Smith decided to fly VFR (**visual** was then called **contact** (flying) and was designated "Army flight 0577."

If the ceiling dropped below 1000 ft. he would have to return to Bedford or seek an alternate or go instrument. On his flight clearance, Smith carefully scratched out the weather for Newark and wrote in the forecast for LaGuardia. To circumvent any potential problems, he wrote, *"I have official business ...at LaGuardia. I am familiar with the danger areas in my line of flight."*

As Smith was taxiing out a jeep pulled alongside and the driver flagged the aircraft to stop. A young sailor jumped out and motioned that he wanted to come aboard. His name was Albert Perna and he had received a telegram from his parents that his brother had been killed during a kamikaze attack on the destroyer SS Luce. They wanted him to come home immediately.

At 0855, with 974 gallons of fuel—enough for seven hours flying time—the B-25 took-off. Six minutes after takeoff, Martha Smith, his wife, had the tower try to contact her husband as he had left with the car keys and she was stranded at the airport. They were unsuccessful as Smith had changed frequencies.

Although Smith had plenty of experience flying the B-17, he had accumulated relatively few hours in the B-25. With no copilot and poor weather, he was kept busy and preoccupied with flying the plane. Radio communications proved frustrating—so many aircraft were flying under IFR flight plans. Periodically, Smith would break in to ask for weather at LaGuardia, only to be told to stay on the frequency since he was flying VFR or visually.

The bomber maintained 1000 ft. cruising at 250 mph until reaching New Haven. With visibility dropping, the B-25 descended to 900 feet and skirted the coast eventually dropping to 650 ft. getting close to LaGuardia at 9:45 am.

Smith then radioed the LaGuardia control tower asking for the current weather at Newark. When asked for a position, he mistakenly stated 15 miles SE. The tower, a beehive of activity, told Army 0577 to contact Newark. But within minutes the B-25 banked in full view of the tower personnel. No one knows why the bomber was there. Tower chief Victor Barden immediately radioed the plane giving the surface winds and active runway. Barden told the bomber to fly a normal left hand pattern. Smith then stated he needed to land at Newark and once again requested weather.

Everyone in the tower realized the B-25 was in the traffic pattern illegally, but nobody seemed to want the responsibility of bringing the plane down. Both LaGuardia and Newark were below minimum VFR but Smith insisted on flying contact to Newark; the current visibility was given at 2.25 miles. The LaGuardia tower stated "The decision is at your discretion. Please advise;" no response.

At 9:52 am *Feather Merchant* turned SW and descended even lower to 500 ft. The LaGuardia tower radioed Army 0577 to say the top of the Empire State Building could not be seen. No acknowledgment was given. At the Triborough Bridge, Smith turned east, obviously confusing the East River with the Hudson River. Smith then lowered the landing gear and prepared for what he thought was the final approach. The error quickly manifested itself as the B-25 hurtled just above Manhattan Island.

The plane passed to the right of St. Patrick's Cathedral and banked sharply left, just missing the RCA building and Rockefeller Center. With wings level and under full power, the props clawed the air in an attempt to gain altitude as the ship flew parallel to Fifth Avenue. The extended landing gear, now was beginning to retract, added drag and precious seconds to climb time.

As the aircraft flew across Fifth Avenue, Stan Lomax, a radio sports announcer for WOR, looked to see the belly of the B-25 and yelled "Climb, you damn fool, climb!" But it was too late!

At 975 feet above the ground, with the nose pitched skyward and the engines screaming, the cockpit of the plane hit the 79th floor of the Empire State Building and offices of the Catholic War Relief Services. Three people sitting at their desks were crushed instantly along with the plane's occupants.

The left engine and landing gear crashed through the 79th floor, cutting the steel cables of elevator car No. 6 before exiting the other side of the building. An elevator operator on duty hurtled 1000 feet to the subbasement and survived with two broken legs and a broken back. The remains of the gear and engine, fused together to the roof of the Waldorf Building on 33rd Street.

The plane's six oxygen bottles were propelled into the building rupturing and force-feeding the already hungry fire. Hundreds of gallons of aviation fuel ignited within the building and cascaded to the ground below. A huge fireball erupted from a gaping hole made during the impact, reaching up to the observation deck at the top of the building. A major portion of the right wing fell down to 34th St. but no one on the street was injured.

Fire and super-heated toxic fumes claimed another 7 people within the building. The force of the impact rocked the entire structure and some observers stated the entire building swayed two feet from the force of the impact and the subsequent explosion. Fortunately, because it was a Saturday, few office workers were in the building and tenants had not yet moved into the 8th floor.

Accident investigators placed blame on the pilot. There is conjecture that the air controllers were also at fault since they had the responsibility and the means to stop the B-25 from continuing a flight which had illegally entered a control zone in IFR weather and had proceeded contact flight below VFR minimums.

The repairs to the Empire State Building took just three months. Only the window washer can now see where the B-25 hit. Just a black line of discolored limestone remains as a memorial to the tragedy of Col. William "Big Lips" Smith, Jr. and his B-25 bomber.



As the fourth decade of the 20th century arrived, the European and Asiatic continents were already engaged in the Second World War. In America, aviation was rapidly assuming importance as the *"Arsenal of Democracy."* France and Great Britain were ordering large quantities of military aircraft from U.S. Production lines, and our own Air Corps was being expanded as rapidly as new technical advances could be introduced into manufacturing.

Although there were those who called the initial stalemate of the land armies in Europe, *"that phony war,"* there were others who concerned themselves with surveying our aviation assets against the eventuality that the U.S. would become involved in the global conflict. Survey teams of the Army, Navy and the Civil Aeronautics Administration went from airport to airport in Florida filling out forms listing length of runways; direction of prevailing winds; proximity of rail sidings to airports; and countless other topics of military significance.

In June, 1940, Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker spoke in Tampa: *"In a matter of months,"* Rickenbacker said, *"the world's most devastating war would break out in all its fury around and over the United States of America. There is much to be done in preparation."*

In 1938, the Federal government, in an effort to train pilots for possible future wars, passed the **"Civilian Pilot Training program (CPT)."** It provided free ground school to college students and free flight training for the upper 10%. Later high school students were enrolled. It was estimated that of a total enrollment of 11,000, Florida would start with at least 200 trainees, 20 flight instructors, and 20 new training planes.

In October 1939, Rollins College at Winter Park and the Orlando Air School became approved agencies for the CPT. Later, Florida Southern College at Lakeland and the University of Miami were approved. The Embry-Riddle Company operated the flight training program in Miami.

Embry-Riddle was originally organized in 1926 at Lunken Field, Cincinnati, Ohio, by T. Higby Embry and Paul Riddle. Their air mail and training school was one of the many smaller operations that were merged during the 1929-1932 period into what is now American Airlines (then called the AVCO group). Riddle had been in aviation more than twenty years and was a former Army Air Corps pilot and barnstormer. Riddle left Cincinnati in 1931 and started a small operation in Miami while Embry headed for California. When Riddle was awarded the Civilian Pilot Training program for the University of Miami he leased a hangar at the Municipal Airport.

As the military airbase and training program progressed a decision was reached between the services whereby the Navy would have control of the East coast of Florida and the Army Air Corps, the West coast. There were several exceptions to this plan, such as the Naval Air Station at Lake City and Sanford and the Air Corps installations at Boca Raton, West Palm Beach and Miami.

In 1935, U.S Representative J. Mark Wilcox of West Palm Beach, had introduced his **"National Defense Act"** to Congress. It called for the construction of six new super air bases, one for each section of the country.

Jacksonville began laying the groundwork for a military air establishment at the 1939 session of the State Legislature when, at the request of the city, a law was passed creating the "Duval County Air Base Authority Special Taxing District." Thereafter, the freeholders of Jacksonville and other areas in the taxing district approved issuance of one million dollars in negotiable bonds, the proceeds to be used to acquire without cost to the Federal government, the sites needed for a Naval Air Station and an auxiliary air station near the mouth of the St. Johns River.

The main area consisted of 3,260 acres embracing the site of Camp Foster which had a small airport that had been improved and maintained by the WPA ("Works Progress Administration" a recession-device to supply work for the unemployed). The auxiliary station near the mouth of the St. Johns River became known as the "Mayport base." Later, in 1940 the community of Green Cove Springs, population, 2,200, received another auxiliary field which became known as "Lee Field. It cost the citizens of Duval County about one million dollars to get their bases in operation.

In January 1939, a Federal Board was appointed by the War Dept. to screen suitable locations for such super-bases. During Army Air Corps maneuvers in 1938, pilots had been impressed with the flat, sandy, stretch near Tampa called "Catfish Point." It was far enough from town so that



The sound of marching feet resound along Florida's hotel beaches.

the noise hadn't bothered citizens, yet it was convenient enough for the pilots to reach entertainment centers.

Meanwhile, Arcadia, Florida, was trying to regain the World War I position it held in earlier years. Tampa, through its Chamber of Commerce had agreed to support the Arcadia bid. However, one day, Jerry Waterman, Chairman of the Chamber, received a long distance call from Col. Charles W. Howard advising that General. Frank Andrews, Chief of the Army Air Corps, was flying to Tampa from Panama. At that meeting Gen. Andrews was asked about the chances Arcadia had for securing the southeastern base. *"As much chance as a snowball has of surviving in hell,"* was the reply. He went on to state that it was necessary to have a base of this size near a large city where personnel could accommodate their families with housing, schools, theaters and other recreational facilities. Arcadia was not large enough.

Waterman then went to the Mayor of Tampa and asked him to form a special committee to secure the Southeastern Air Base for Tampa. On July 14, 1939 the Tampa Morning Tribune headline announced, **"WE WILL GET AN AIRBASE"** The name for the base was in honor of WWI pilot, Col. Leslie MacDill, who was killed in a plane crash near Washington D.C. in 1938.

Land clearing operations had already been completed by the end of 1939. At the formal dedication on April 13, 1941, three runways, 5,000 feet long and 250 feet wide were placed in operation by the widow of Col MacDill. First base commander was Col. Clarence L. Tinker, who was killed later in the South Pacific fighting.

The MacDill site was purchased by the Hillsborough County Commission at a cost of \$97,000 and then donated to the Federal government. The city of Tampa, at the same time, leased Drew Field to the Army for 25 years at \$1 per year. It is estimated that the City had invested about \$222,500 in military installations but during the peak years of the war the payroll alone amounted to over \$3 million per month. MacDill became the H.Q. of the Third Air Force, an area of all southern states east of the Mississippi River.

There were actually three air fields in Tampa during the war. MacDill was the primary field with Drew Field, present site of Tampa International, and Henderson Field, present site of Busch Gardens, as auxiliary fields. Dale Mabry's Highway, named in memory of Capt. Dale Mabry of Tampa, who perished in the crash of the Italian dirigible "Roma" in Hampton Virginia in 1922, was constructed to link MacDill with Drew Field.

During the war, MacDill was the home for as many as 15,000 personnel at one time. When the base became the home for the Third Bomber Command in 1943, it began training crews for B-25s and B-26 bombers. It also trained combat crews for the B-17 "Flying Fortresses," which were the first official aircraft stationed there.

The Martin B-26 twin-engine Marauder bombers appeared in 1942. They were short-winged and had powerful 2000 hp engines, making them "hot" on landing for low-time pilots. Soon the phrase *"One a day in Tampa Bay"* was echoing as fifteen of the B-26s crashed into the Bay over a 30 day period. The problem was solved by lengthening the wings and making steeper approaches.

In Jan. 1945, the first B-29 "Superfortresses" were delivered. These planes were the largest in the world, with a wingspan of more than 141 ft.; these were the planes that would later drop the atomic bombs on Japan.

Following the war MacDill Field became **"MacDill Air Force Base"** and the Strategic Air Command established an operational base there. More recently, in 1980, the new F-16 fighter planes arrived.

BOOK REVUE: Excerpts from Robin's biography "*Robin Olds, Fighter Pilot*," by Christina Olds, his daughter, and Ed Rasmus, a friend, (ISBN 978-0-312-56951-8) is a great book and sells for around \$16. For details contact Amazon.com or St. Martin's Griffin, 175 5th Ave., N.Y., N.Y., 10010.

THE EARLY YEARS

Robin Olds was born at Luke Field Hospital on July 14, 1922 to Army Air Corps Capt. Robert Olds & wife. When he was 4, his mother died and Robin became an "Army Brat," contemplating becoming a fly boy like his Dad. Moving to Virginia he became the captain of the high school football team at 6'2" 190 lbs. and tried to join the RAF in 1939 at age 17. His father refused to sign the papers and he then returned to the Millard Military Prep contemplating an assignment to West Point. Robin was accepted to the class of 1944 at West Point and during the ensuing years made All-American as a line-man. With the advent of Pearl Harbor he was sent to the Spartan School of Aviation in Tulsa, OK for flight training. Basic training ended by Christmas of 1942 & Robin was back at West Point hoping to graduate early due to the war, in June 1943. Just before graduation Robin lost his Dad. With graduation and new 2nd Lt. bars on his collar he is sent to Chandler, AZ for P-38 fighter training & then on to Muroc Dry Lake in the Mojave Desert. Further training at Glendale resulted in 1st Lt. bars and a frustrating extensive looking for a place to send a West Pointer for a flight commander position. He is finally shipped overseas and arrives in Scotland and is now newly arrived at Wattisham, England and has finally seen action on D-Day. Aug. 1, 1944 comes and Robin is still frustrated with zero victories.

Robin is now on patrol in France when he suddenly sees an opportunity.....resulting in downing his first two kills—Focke-Wulf 190s. Two weeks later. On Aug. 25, 1944, 11 days after Robins first two victories the fighter group was destined to a sweep in front of a bomber group. Robin was attempting to aid a fellow pilot when his plane went into *compressibility* and started a downward dive....the day ended with Robin scoring three more victories to make him the squadron's first ace. They were now transitioning from Lightnings to Mustang fighters and they have just accompanied a bomber flight close to Berlin, missing their timed assigned bomber group and now awaiting the fireworks...

Noticing a camera had been placed in Robin's wing just prior to his next bomber escort mission. After a difficult camera bombing run Robin is now hi-tailing it for home...Robin has just finished his R & R and has arrived back in England to begin his second round of aerial combat. Finally the war is over!

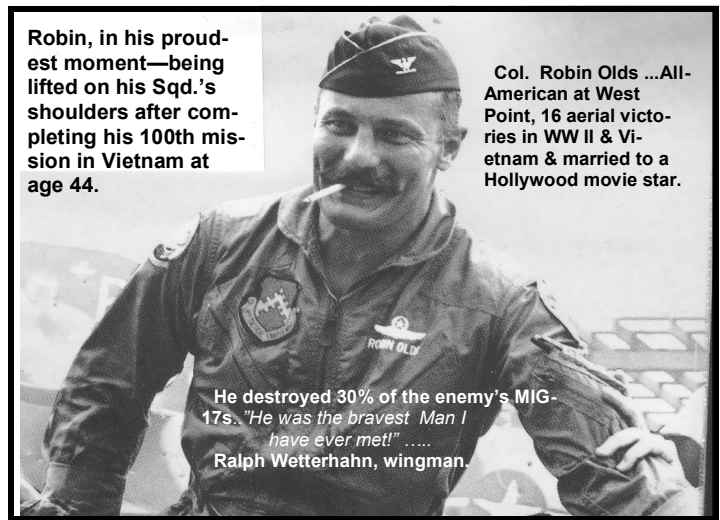
WOW! Me, a lowly major way down on the totem pole, reporting to the four-star who commanded all of the Allied air power in Europe? Spaatz and my dad had been close friends and we had lived next door to each other at Langley Field when I was just a teenager. It still felt uncomfortable to be singled out. Regardless, I dug out my best uniform, grabbed my shaving kit, and took off in my Mustang for the Villacoublay Airdrome.

A staff car met me and delivered me to the front door of an imposing building where I found my way to the commanding general's office. There a master sergeant informed me I was expected at the general's chateau "*tout de suite*." After another short car ride, I was delivered to the chateau. I pulled the bell chain beside a massive ornate wooden door. After a long interval (enough to make me wonder if the driver had possibly made a mistake), the door opened and there stood Lieutenant Colonel Sally Bagby, known throughout the theater as the general's personal aide. The colonel informed me that I was early, the general was having a nap, the guests weren't due to arrive for another forty-five minutes, and I could find the bar in the corner of the main salon. Obviously, some kind of gathering was planned, and for an unknown reason, I was part of it.

I found the bar easily. Without asking, I poured myself a stiff scotch. Good stuff, too! The room was beautiful, with a high painted ceiling, dark oak paneling, oil paintings, antique fixtures, Oriental rugs, and comfortable-looking furniture, all dominated by the floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking a formal garden framed by trees. There was an almost unreal view of the Eiffel Tower in the far distance. The effect was like a sixteenth-century painting. I sipped my drink and leaned conformably against the bar, not wanting to be

Robin, in his proudest moment—being lifted on his Sqd.'s shoulders after completing his 100th mission in Vietnam at age 44.

Col. Robin Olds ...All-American at West Point, 16 aerial victories in WW II & Vietnam & married to a Hollywood movie star.



He destroyed 30% of the enemy's MIG-17s. "He was the bravest Man I have ever met!" Ralph Wetterhahn, wingman.

seated when the rest of the crowd arrived.

The room gradually filled. I realized I was looking at men whose names and position were known to the world: Eaker, Vandenberg, Stratemeyer, Quesada, Norstad, Doolittle, Partridge, Strorthers, and more. I had never personally seen a three star, let alone a four, and I felt as out of place as a pig at a party. I made plenty of room at the bar, as some of the generals gave me a glare that said, "I don't give a damn, but who the hell are you?" Others simply ignored me completely, which was fine. I backed into the corner near the window and waited to see what would happen.

Voices rose as the room buzzed with excitement. There was loud laughter and a great deal of backslapping and hand shaking. It made me think of a locker room after a hard fought football victory, but that was a really pallid comparison. These men had played large individual roles in achieving total victory over the German enemy. They were among their peers and seemed to let down some of the barriers of restraint and detachment usually exercised by men of their position.

Suddenly, there was a pause and everyone turned to the far end of the room. General Spaatz stood at the top of a broad flight of stairs. The crowd broke into cheers and there were cries of "Welcome back, boss!" as the ranking men expressed their unbridled respect for the leader they had followed to this victory.

General Spaatz acknowledged their greetings with self-deprecating waves of his hands as he came halfway down the stairs. He seemed to be looking over the crowd for someone. He stopped, looked right at me standing in the corner, waved and shouted, "Hi, Robin! God it's good to see you. Glad you made it."

A murmur of disbelief followed him as he ignored everyone else and came across the room to my corner.

He put his arms around my shoulders and led me away, saying, "Come on, let's go into my poker room. We can't talk in here, and I have lots to tell you. Then I want to hear all about you."

Needless to say, I was flabbergasted, but the Old Man put me at ease as we entered the game room and sat at his green-covered poker table. An enlisted aid brought him a cocktail and asked if I wanted anything. I declined, thinking, I'd better keep my wits about me.

After telling me my father would have been proud of me (which brought a lump to my throat), General Spaatz went on to relate his experiences at the surrender ceremony. He described how the Russians had toasted every signature with a shot of vodka, which naturally had to be answered in kind. By the time the envoy from Lithuania had his turn, his aides had to help him to the signing table. The general laughed and confessed he wasn't feeling too spry himself by that time and was glad his signature was one of the first. He went on to tell me of the new weapons of war the Germans had been developing: manned rocket interceptors, large V-2's, better fighters, and a host of equipment that might well have prolonged the war by years. Apparently, the Allied crossing of the Rhine was not just timely, but extremely decisive.

I felt as though General Spaatz were my father. His manner was warm and personal.

(Continued next edition.)



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FAHS MEETINGS FOR

1st Saturday, monthly meeting of the FAHS at AWAPS,
Albert Whitted Airport (451 8th Ave., S.E., St. Petersburg, Fl.,)
all invited at 10:30 am.

Informal Luncheon "Hangar Flying" each Wednesday
noon at the Largo Family Restaurant, 788 N. Missouri Ave.,
Largo, Fl. 33770, Phone: 727 584 7330. All invited.

(Our 41st Year.)



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FLORIDA AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Application Form

Contributing Member, \$25; Benefactor, \$100 and up.
Those with Winter-Summer (2) addresses, must notify the
FAHS when they change residences.
ENCLOSED FIND _____ dollars to cover my membership.
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ADDRESS.....
Nine number ZIP Code.....
Internet Address:
Phone:
(To receive a membership card, you must include internet address.)
FAHS Address: AWAPS, Albert Whitted Airport,
451 8th Ave. S.E., St. Petersburg, FL., 33701

VOLUNTARY QUESTIONNAIRE: Are you a pilot? Y___N___;
Are you a Veteran? Y___N___; If yes, which war: WW I___, Korean
War___? Vietnam War___? Cold War___? Iraq Wars___;
Flying Hours _____ Highest rating or rank? _____
What is the Month & Day of your birth? _____ Year optional _____

YESTERDAY'S FLORIDA AVIATION HISTORY

THE WAR YEARS:

January 1, 1940...At the beginning of 1940 there were 8 military installations in Florida. By 1943 there were 172

January 2, 1940...Orlando, FL...487 neophyte pilots join the Florida Flying Alligator Club by walking through a pit of 50 alligator for initiation at the Coliseum. Membership stands at 1,900.

January 3, 1940...St. Petersburg, FL...Over 200 planes in the Light Plane Cavalcade (*Aerocade*) fly to St. Petersburg to fill up on cold orange juice. The party lasts three days..

January 4, 1940, Miami, FL...Over 1,000 planes arrive in Miami for the Air Maneuvers air show.

January 7, 1940, West Palm Beach, FL...Light planes in 5 planes or less squadrons leave Miami for West Palm Beach. Pilots spend an average of \$5-\$10/day with Gulf Oil paying for the fuel.

March 1940, Orlando, FL...The Monocoupe Company moves from St. Louis to Orlando. Eleven train carloads of equipment and families arrive. There is some difficulty with the Chamber of Commerce in working out details

March 11, 1940, Tampa, FL...The first 600 troops arrive at MacDill from Barksdale Field. They are attached to B-17s and B-18s from the 29th Group.

May 1940...Lakeland, FL. E. J. Sias, Lincoln School of Aeronautics in Omaha, Nebraska makes a deal to move his aviation school to Lakeland where there is all-year-round flying weather. The transfer is to take place in August.

June 1940, Tampa, FL...Flag raising ceremony at MacDill.

July 1940, Lakeland, FL. E. J. Sias sells his "Lakeland School of Aeronautics" to Hal Darr and Albert Lodwick. In August, the Lincoln School equipment moves to Lakeland with a new name and new owners.

August 1940, Orlando, FL...Clair Bunch, CEO of Monocoupe, states funds are deleted, Monocoupe becomes part of Universal Moulded Products

Aug. 15, 1940, Miami, FL., Opa-Locks becomes a Naval Air Station. It had previously been referred to as a "Naval Reserve Base."

September 16, 1940, Ft. Myers...Selective Service becomes law. Ft. Myers registers 2,164 men.

September 31, 1940, President Roosevelt trades 50 old World War I destroyers to England for bases in Iceland, Northern Ireland, Bermuda and Trinidad.